

# **WILLOUGHBY HILLS POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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## **PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THEFT**

By: Mayor/Safety Director Robert Weger

In these tough economic times and with a growing drug dependent population, we're seeing an alarming increase in thefts from cars and homes. These desperate criminals are looking for easy opportunities to steal money, jewelry, guns and other items of value they can trade or pawn to support their criminal lifestyles and drug habits. They make quick entry into cars and homes; often the car burglaries are at night and the home burglaries are during the day. We as a community need to stay alert and take steps to protect ourselves and our neighbors. We'd like to suggest the following.

1. Stay alert and report any suspicious activities, people, or vehicles. Don't ever hesitate to call the police department; we're here to protect, serve and respond to any requests for assistance around the clock.
2. Keep your valuables in a safe place in your home and not obvious locations like the bedrooms. Often this is the first place burglars go to knowing valuables are often kept there. Safety deposit boxes are recommended for valuable and irreplaceable items.
3. Have an up to date inventory documenting valuable items to include photographs, videos, receipts, and other important documents that may provide the value, purchase date, description and proof of ownership. Keep a few copies of your inventory, photos, etc. in multiple safe places or with other family members.
4. Keep your home and cars locked at all times, even when home. Keep your garage doors closed and locked. Don't leave your keys in your cars even if parked in a locked garage. Consider keeping lights on inside and outside your home. Outside motion security lights are popular.
5. Don't allow unsolicited sales people or strangers into your home and never allow them into areas of your home or property unattended, i.e. to use your bathroom. Often criminals will work in pairs and try to separate from each other once they make contact with you. Or they may return to your home later if they gather information on your personal schedule.
6. "The Buddy System" - notify your friends and neighbors you trust when you're out of town for any length of time. Contact the police department with this information and provide local contact persons who would be available to help with any problems while you're gone.
7. Consider a home security alarm system that provides services for police, fire and ambulance.